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Expressing the sense of Congress with respect to human rights in Central Asia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 26, 2005

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself and Mr. ACKERMAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress with respect to human rights in Central Asia.

Whereas the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are providing the United States with important assistance in the war in Afghanistan, including military basing, overflight rights, and the facilitation of humanitarian relief;

Whereas America's victory over the Taliban in Afghanistan in turn provided important benefits to these Central Asian countries, removing a regime that threatened their security, and significantly weakening the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a terrorist organization that had pre-

viously staged armed raids from Afghanistan into the region;

Whereas the United States has consistently urged the countries of Central Asia to open their political systems and economies and to respect human rights, both before and since the attacks against the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001;

Whereas Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are members of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), both of which confer a range of human rights obligations on their members;

Whereas, although the United States recognizes that there are marked differences among the social structures of these Central Asian countries and their commitments to democratic and economic reform, according to the Department of State's Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the governments of such countries, to differing degrees, restrict freedom of speech and association, restrict or ban the activities of human rights organizations and other nongovernmental organizations, harass or prohibit independent media, harass or imprison political opponents, practice arbitrary detention and arrest, and engage in torture and extrajudicial executions;

Whereas in March 2004, the United Nations announced the deployment of an international human rights expert in Kazakhstan as its regional adviser for Central Asia in order to provide advice and training to government officials and policy makers, nongovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, and other international organizations;

Whereas in April 2004, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development decided to limit its investment in Uzbekistan due to the lack of progress in human rights, following the expiration of the one-year deadline the Bank had set for the Uzbek Government to meet specific human rights benchmarks as a condition for further engagement;

Whereas in July 2004, after a Department of State review of democratization in Uzbekistan, Secretary of State Colin Powell decided that the Government of Uzbekistan was not fulfilling the terms of a 2002 Strategic Partnership Framework agreement that mandated “substantial and continuing progress” on democratization, and decided not to certify Uzbekistan as eligible to receive United States assistance;

Whereas, by continuing to suppress human rights and to deny citizens peaceful, democratic means of expressing their convictions, the countries of Central Asia risk fueling popular support for violent and extremist movements, thus undermining the goals of the Global War on Terrorism;

Whereas President Bush has made the defense of “human dignity, the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women and private property and free speech and equal justice and religious tolerance” strategic goals of United States foreign policy in the Islamic world, arguing that “a truly strong nation will permit legal avenues of dissent for all groups that pursue their aspirations without violence”; and

Whereas Congress has expressed its desire to see deeper reform in the countries of Central Asia in resolutions and other legislation, most recently conditioning assistance to

Uzbekistan on its progress in meeting human rights and democracy commitments to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) the Governments of Kazakhstan,
 4 Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and
 5 Uzbekistan should accelerate democratic reforms
 6 and fulfill their human rights obligations, including,
 7 where appropriate, by—

8 (A) releasing from prison all individuals
 9 jailed for peaceful political activism or the non-
 10 violent expression of their political or religious
 11 beliefs, including Felix Kulov in Kyrgyzstan;

12 (B) fully investigating any credible allega-
 13 tions of torture and prosecuting those individ-
 14 uals responsible;

15 (C) permitting the free and unfettered
 16 functioning of independent media outlets, inde-
 17 pendent political parties, and nongovernmental
 18 organizations, whether officially registered or
 19 not;

20 (D) permitting the free exercise of reli-
 21 gious beliefs and ceasing the persecution of
 22 members of religious groups and denominations
 23 not registered with the state;

1 (E) holding free, transparent, competitive,
2 and fair elections; and

3 (F) making publicly available documenta-
4 tion of their revenues and expenditures and
5 punishing those individuals engaged in official
6 corruption;

7 (2) the President, the Secretary of State, and
8 the Secretary of Defense should—

9 (A) continue to raise at the highest levels
10 with the governments of the countries of Cen-
11 tral Asia specific cases of political and religious
12 persecution, and urge greater respect for
13 human rights and democratic freedoms at every
14 diplomatic opportunity;

15 (B) continue to take progress in meeting
16 the goals outlined in paragraph (1) into account
17 when determining the level and frequency of
18 United States diplomatic engagement with the
19 governments of the countries of Central Asia,
20 the allocation of United States assistance for
21 such countries, and the nature of United States
22 military engagement with such countries;

23 (C) ensure that the provisions of the an-
24 nual foreign operations, export financing and
25 related programs appropriations Act continue to

1 be fully implemented to ensure that United
2 States assistance does not benefit the security
3 forces of Central Asian countries that are impli-
4 cated in violations of human rights;

5 (D) follow the recommendations of the
6 United States Commission on International Re-
7 ligious Freedom by designating Turkmenistan a
8 “Country of Particular Concern” under the
9 International Religious Freedom Act of 1998
10 and by making clear that Uzbekistan risks a
11 similar designation if conditions in that country
12 do not improve;

13 (E) urge the Government of Turkmenistan
14 to respect the right of imprisoned opposition
15 leader Boris Shikmuradov to due process and a
16 fair trial and to release democratic activists and
17 their family members from prison;

18 (F) urge the Government of the Russian
19 Federation not to extradite to Turkmenistan
20 members of that country’s political opposition
21 and to condition future bilateral relations with
22 the Government of Turkmenistan on concrete,
23 verifiable improvements in human rights and
24 encourage political and economic reforms;

1 (G) work with the Government of
2 Kazakhstan to create a political climate free of
3 intimidation and harassment, including releas-
4 ing political prisoners and permitting the return
5 of political exiles, most notably Akezan
6 Kazegeldin, and to reduce official corruption,
7 including by urging the Government of
8 Kazakhstan to cooperate with the ongoing De-
9 partment of Justice investigation, and if con-
10 victed independent journalist Sergey Duvanov
11 decides to appeal his verdict, to ensure that due
12 process will be strictly followed in accordance
13 with Kazakhstani law and international stand-
14 ards of justice;

15 (H) work with the Government of
16 Uzbekistan to address the serious concerns
17 about systemic torture documented in the re-
18 ports of the United Nations Special Rapporteur
19 on Torture and to implement recommendations
20 made in the report;

21 (I) work with the Government of
22 Kyrgyzstan to introduce changes in the recently
23 adopted constitution that would address con-
24 cerns about protections for human rights and
25 balance of powers; and

1 (J) support, through United States assist-
2 ance programs, those individuals, nongovern-
3 mental organizations, and media outlets in the
4 countries of Central Asia working to establish
5 more open societies, to support the victims of
6 human rights abuses, and to expose official cor-
7 ruption; and

8 (3) United States assistance to the governments
9 of the countries of Central Asia, made possible by
10 their cooperation in the war in Afghanistan, can be
11 sustained only if there is substantial and continuing
12 progress toward meeting the goals outlined in para-
13 graph (1).

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